

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /055 W
----- 122454 /22
R 140900Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6738
INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SN
SUBJECT: PAP WINS 16 ON NOMINATION DAY

REFS: (A) SINGAPORE 5505, (B) SINGAPORE 5569,
(C) SINGAPORE 5575

1. SUMMARY. SIXTEEN PAP CANDIDATES WERE RETURNED UNOPPOSED ON NOMINATION DAY, DECEMBER 13; 53 CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE CONTESTED, INCLUDING TWO THREE-WAY FIGHTS. THE WORKER'S PARTY FIELDDED ONLY 22 CANDIDATES, THE UNITED FRONT 15, THE BARISAN SOSIALIS 6, THE UNITED PEOPLE'S FRONT 6, THE JUSTICE PARTY 2, PKMS 2, AND INDEPENDENTS 2. END SUMMARY.

2. SIXTEEN PAP CANDIDATES WERE RETURNED UNOPPOSED WHEN NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED YESTERDAY. THESE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING SIX CABINET MINISTERS: DR. GOH KENG SWEE, ONG PANG BOON, JEK YEUN THONG, CHUA SIAN CHIN, E. W. BARKER, AND DR. LEE CHIAW MENG. SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE K.C. LEE WAS ALSO RETURNED UNOPPOSED.

3. SIX INCUMBENT PAP MPS WERE DROPPED. THE ONLY ONE LIKELY TO BE AT ALL FAMILIAR TO FOREIGN POLITICAL OBSERVERS IS WONG LIN KEN, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S.

4. THE OPPOSITION HAS HELD TO ITS ELECTORAL DIVISION PACT. IN ADDITION, THE WORKER'S PARTY HAS YIELDED TO THE UPF CANDIDATES SO THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO THREE-WAY
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CONTESTS -- ONE UPF-PKMS, AND ONE WP-INDEPENDENT. THE

WORKER'S PARTY FAILED TO CONTEST 12 OF THE 33 CONSTITUENCIES ALLOTTED TO IT, INCLUDING THREE YIELDED TO THE UPF. THE UNITED FRONT FAILED TO CONTEST 5 OF 20, INCLUDING ONE YIELDED TO THE UPF. THE JUSTICE PARTY FAILED TO CONTEST 6 OF 8, INCLUDING ONE YIELDED TO THE UPF AND ONE TO THE WP. THE BARISAN SOSIALIS FILED ITS ANNOUNCED 6; PKMS (JOINT OPPOSITION COUNCIL-ALLIED FACTION) FILED ITS ANNOUNCED 2, AND TWO INDEPENDENTS FILED. THE UNITED PEOPLE'S FRONT ENDED UP FILING FOR SIX SEATS, A FAR CRY FROM THE 69 TO WHICH THEY HAD EARLIER PUBLICLY ASPIRED.

5. PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW REPEATED THE MAIN PAP THEMES AT HIS NOMINATION DAY PRESS CONFERENCE WHEN HE CASTIGATED THE OPPOSITION'S INEXPERIENCE AND LACK OF CREDIBILITY. STRESSING THE NEED FOR THE PAP'S LEADERSHIP TO MEET THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AHEAD, LEE ARGUED HE HAD "ALWAYS BELIEVED IN CLEARING THE DECKS BEFORE I RUN INTO ROUGH WEATHER" AS JUSTIFICATION FOR HOLDING AN EARLY ELECTION.

5. COMMENT: THE OPPOSITION FAILED TO CAPITALIZE ON SEVERAL GOOD OPPORTUNITIES AMONG THE SIXTEEN UNCONTESTED SEATS. DESPITE WORKER PARTY CHIEF JEYARETNAM'S ALLEGATION OF HARASSMENT OF POTENTIAL CANDIDATES, HIS PARTY'S FAILURE TO FILL ITS SEATS WAS APPARENTLY DUE TO ORGANIZATIONAL INCOMPETENCE AND LACK OF FINANCE. THE UF FAILURE TO STAND IN 5 CONSTITUENCIES IS CLEARLY DUE TO LACK OF FUNDS; SEVERAL PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED UF CANDIDATES QUIETLY FAILED TO FILE.
HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SINGAP05609
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760460-0192
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761244/aaaablwj.tel
Line Count: 91
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 SINGAPORE 5505, 76 SINGAPORE 5569, 76 SINGAPORE 5575
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUN 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <23 SEP 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PAP WINS 16 ON NOMINATION DAY
TAGS: PINT, SN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006